

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
March 16, 2007

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North Dakota Observes National Poison Prevention Week
State Health Department Urges North Dakotans To Learn About Poison Prevention

BISMARCK, N.D. – In observance of National Poison Prevention Week March 18 through 24, 2007, the North Dakota Department of Health is encouraging adults to take measures to protect children from unintentional poisonings, according to Diana Read, Injury/Violence Prevention Program coordinator for the Department of Health.

National Poison Prevention Week began more than 40 years ago by President John F. Kennedy and continues to help American families learn how to protect their children and themselves from unintentional poisonings.

Each year, about 30 American children younger than 5 die from unintentional poisonings, and more than one million calls are made to the nation's poison control centers.

“Children younger than 5 are constantly exploring and investigating the world around them,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “Because most poisonings are preventable, it's so important that we adults do everything we can to protect children from unintentional poisonings.”

The Department of Health offers the following poison prevention measures:

- Keep all medicines, household chemicals and other poisonous substances away from children and away from food. Never leave them on the bedside stand, kitchen table or bathroom counter. Lock them up if possible.
- Warn children never to put medicines, chemicals, plants or berries in their mouths unless an adult says it's OK. At an early age, teach children that some pretty things, like vitamins and aspirin, can hurt them. Never call medicine “candy” to get a child to take it.

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- Never store poison or chemicals in food or beverage containers.
- Read all labels. Follow the instructions and measure carefully. Open and take medicines only when the lights are on.
- Put all unused medications in a sturdy, securely sealed container and then in the trash can where children and pets can't reach them.
- Do not carry medicine in your purse or diaper bags because children like to play with them.
- Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them because lamp oil is very toxic.
- Keep windows and/or doors open or run fans when using strong cleaning products. Never mix cleaning products together.
- Have the national poison control phone number with your other emergency contacts. Telephone stickers and magnets with the phone number are available from the North Dakota Department of Health.

In case of a poisoning or a questionable episode, people should do the following:

- Do not give the person anything to eat or drink. Call the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222 immediately.
- Bring the product or bottle to the phone so you can read the label to the staff at the Poison Control Center. Explain what was taken, how much was taken, when it was taken, and the age and weight of the person.
- Do not give syrup of ipecac or activated charcoal unless told to do so by the Poison Control Center or your physician.

Calls from North Dakota to the national poison control phone number are answered by Hennepin Regional Poison Control Center in Minneapolis, Minn. Of the 7,193 calls from North Dakotans in 2006, more than 4,000 were for unintentional poisonings. More than 60 percent of the calls involved children younger than 5.

For more information about poison prevention or to request stickers and magnets with the national poison control number, contact Diana Read, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2286 (press 1).

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